

Remarks

Claims 1, 3-5, 10-11, and 16-17 were rejected as unpatentable over MOULTON et al. 5,178,829 in view of JACOBS et al. 5,667,753. Claim 8 was rejected further in view of HIGH et al. 6,467,618. Claim 1 has been amended and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Claim 1 includes a sterilization chamber having therein a metal object holder on which objects to be sterilized are disposed. Walls of the sterilisation chamber include a material that is adapted to heat up by recombination of nitrogen and have a capacity of recombination of nitrogen less than that of the metal object holder. The metal object holder heats under the effect of recombination of the nitrogen and, in combination with heat from the walls of said sterilization chamber, heats the objects thereon to at least 60°C.

Specifically, the references do not disclose or suggest that the walls of the sterilisation chamber include a material that is adapted to heat up by recombination of nitrogen and have a capacity of recombination of nitrogen less than that of the metal object holder. They are silent on the relative nitrogen recombination capacity of the material of the walls to the material of the metal object holder, where both the metal object holder and the walls heat the object.

For example, MOULTON et al. discloses that the sterilization chamber is heated by increasing the plasma gas volume entering the

chamber (increasing pressure increases temperature) or by increasing the plasma gas energy. Further, JACOBS et al. discloses resistance heaters that heat the exterior of the chamber walls to control the temperature of the chamber. Thus, the references disclose heating means that are different from using a wall material for the sterilization chamber that heats up by recombination of nitrogen as claimed.

The dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, the amended claims avoid the rejections under §103.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

/Thomas W. Perkins/
Thomas W. Perkins, Reg. No. 33,027
209 Madison Street, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22314
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

TWP/jr